Rural Electrification Corporation (REC) has set a target of 7000 villages during the first three years of the Ninth Plan Period. Out of the targets set, REC has already achieved electrification of 6281 villages at the end of December, 1999. Rural Electrification Corporation (REC) under RE programme has set a target of energisation of 7,40,000 pumpsets during the first three years of the Ninth Plan period. Out of the targets set, REC has already achieved energisation of 6,49,000 pumpsets at the end of December, 1999.

Sale of Power by SEBs

*378. SHRI SANTOSH BAGRODIA : Will the Minister of POWER be pleased to state :

(a) whether Government are aware that some of the State Electricity Boards are forcing the industrial consumers to buy power for their use even when such industries have their own captive power;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(c) whether the Central Government would formulate a policy by which crores of Rupees invested for production of captive power is not kept idle due to short term policy of State Electricity Boards and public sector power producers ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF POWER (SHRIMATI JAYAWANTI MEHTA) : (a) The Government has not received any complaint from any of the captive power producers of their being forced to buy power from the State Electricity Boards even when they have their own captive power.

(b) Does not arise in view of reply to (a) above.

(c) The Government of India, through a circular letter dated October 9, 1995 has advised the State Governments/State Electricity Boards to encourage setting up of captive generation plants and to create an institutional mechanism which may allow captive power units an easy entry into the power sector by quickly clearing captive power applications, giving the developers a rational tariff for purchase of surplus power by the grid and third party access for direct sale of power to other industrial units.

Economic Development of NF States

*379. SHRI KHAGEN DAS : Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to State :

(a) whether Government have any package of programme for the speedy econo development of the North-Eastern States;

(b) if so, the priority fields in that package; and

(c) the progress of work in those fields ?

THE MINISTER OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI L.K. ADVANI) : (a) and (b) Government is committed to the speedy socio-economic development of the North Eastern States. These States have been declared as Special Category States. Certain special projects/schemes have also been announced by successive Prime Ministers for the economic development of these States.

The priority fields are Power, Roads, Railways, Civil Aviation, Horticulture, Self-employment and Information Technology.

(c) (i) **Power.**—The Doyang Hydro-electric Project (75MW) is likely to be commissioned by May 2000 and the Ranganadi Hydro-electric Project (405 MW) by September 2001.

(ii) **Roads.**—12 new National Highways or extension of the existing National Highways have been sanctioned during the last two years with a length of 1962 Kms. 8 roads under the NEC Plan have also been sanctioned recently at a total cost of Rs. 258.24 crores.

(iii) **Railways.**—The bridge at Jogighopa and the line from Jogighopa to Guwahati have been completed and commissioned (142 Kms.) at a cost of Rs. 461.94 crores. Works on 1218.25 Kms. of railway lines, including Kumarghat-Agartala railway line (119 Kms.), have been taken up.

(iv) **Civil Aviation.**—The works relating to extension of apron at Guwahati airport has been completed. A modern radar has also been installed at that airport. Schemes for the upgradation of airports at Agartala, Dibrugarh, Dimapur, Jorhat, and Lilabari have been undertaken.

(v) **Technology Mission for Horticulture.**—A Technology Mission for Horticulture, with a total outlay of Rs. 262.5 crores over the next three years, has been announced. The Ministry of Agriculture has prepared a detailed Action Plan for sanction and implementation of the Mission Project.

(vi) **Industrial Training Institutes (ITI).**—It has been decided to double the number of Industrial Training Institutes in the North East for imparting training in new trades during the next three years with an outlay of Rs. 100 crores.

(vii) **Information Technology.**—It has been decided to establish Community Information Centres in all the 446 Blocks in the seven North Eastern States and 40 Blocks in Sikkim at a total cost of Rs. 100 crores.

Number of Freedom Fighter Pensioners

*380. DR. ARUN KUMAR SARMA : Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) the State-wise number of Freedom Fighter Pensioners, total amount disbursed every year during the last 3 years;

(b) the number of application received from various States requiring Government sanction for pension: and

(c) the names of applicants from Assam whose applications are pending for sanction indicating the date of receiving application, reasons for delay and likely time to be taken for sanction ?

THE MINISTER OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI L.K. ADVANI): (a) and (b) A statement indicating the number of applications received and the number of freedom fighters in whose cases pension has been sanctioned by the Central Government is enclosed in statement (*see* below).

Information about the total amount of pension disbursed during the last years is given below :—

(Rs. in crores)

	1996-97	1997-98	1998-99
Amount of Pension disbursed	131.98	177.52	177.79

(c) No case, complete in all respects and eligible for Swatantrata Sainik Samman Pension, duly verified and recommended by the State Government of Assam, is pending.